CHAPTER FOUR

Writing the History of Independent Indonesia

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WRITING THE story of independent Indonesia has been a more than usually difficult enterprise, and particularly so for Indonesians. Very few have undertaken it, and most who did were either in the triumphalist semi-official school of Suharto's New Order, or were foreign political scientists or journalists telling a generally disenchanted story of failure. Before Taufik Abdullah's work, I know of no professional historian, Indonesian or foreign, who set out to tell the story of independent Indonesia as a totality, except as part of semi-official projects such as the national history or fiftieth anniversary celebrations. This chapter is designed to explain why it has been so difficult.

A Rupture with the Past

Revolutions have a way of breaking continuity with the past, as is indeed their intention. The normally fuzzy transition between the contemporary domain of the social scientists and the territory of the historian becomes a sharp break when marked by a revolution. While history is passionately important for revolutionaries, once in power they tend to make things difficult for historians of anything but ancient times. The past has to preserve a powerful myth, essential to the new way in which the revolutionary state sees itself. This is true even for the French, Russian, Chinese or Vietnamese

revolutions, which explicitly sought a new beginning in which science and rationality would rule, in contrast with a discredited old order of oppression, hierarchy and privilege. Indonesian revolutionaries took the same view. Tan Malaka, the most cerebral of them, declared that "the true Indonesian nation does not yet have a history except one of slavery", while the leading professional historian of the 1950s titled both his first books in a way that consigned Indonesia's whole pre-independence past to a "feudal" category.[1]

Indonesia's revolution however brought a further discontinuity even more profound than these other revolutions. The language of the revolution was romanized Malay, renamed Bahasa Indonesia, and from the time of its triumph virtually all education was in that language alone. The languages of Indonesia's written past were Dutch (preeminently), and a range of vernaculars of which the most important were Javanese, Malay in Arabic script, Sundanese and Bugis, each written in a difficult script of its own, increasingly lost to the new educated generation. The first generation of nationalists who grappled with building a new past for a new country were all at home in Dutch, and could use a large body of Dutch historical writing for different purposes. Their students, however, lost contact with all the languages of their pasts extremely rapidly, and were put off history altogether by its arcane linguistic demands. In former colonies of the British, Americans, French or Spanish (and in a surprising throwback even the Portuguese in East Timor) the language of the colonizer remained useful and valued long after independence. But the dropping of Dutch as an internationally useless, even embarrassing, reminder of past subjection, was very sudden with the arrival in 1942 of the Japanese conquerors, who had absolutely no use for it. The new second language of the national education system after 1950 was English, and the overwhelming majority of Indonesian-educated students accessed international ideas in that language only. Bad to non-existent relations with the Netherlands in the 1950s and 1960s removed the possibility of maintaining continuities by pursuing higher education in the Netherlands.

The minuteness of the remnant truly comfortable with Dutch after the passing of most of the first generation in the 1960s helps to explain their crucial importance in Indonesian history. This applies especially to Sartono Kartodirdjo (b. 1921) at Gadjah Mada University, the only Professor of History in the country until the 1980s and therefore the supervisor of all the

second generation of historians who could not study abroad. Among these the Menadonese maritime historian A.B. Lapian (b. 1929), the Ambonese historian of eastern Indonesia R.Z. Leirissa (b. 1928), and the aristocratic Javanese intellectual historian Abdurrachman Surjomihardjo (1929–94) moved easily with the Dutch sources as members of the tiny minority raised in Dutch–speaking families.

For the rest, however, Indonesian history since the 1970s has been written, taught and studied by people educated in Indonesian or in English (in the United States, Australia or Britain), for whom Dutch was a difficult foreign language only complicating the already substantial task of mastering English. The linguistic demands of the pre-colonial period — old Javanese, Malay in Arabic script, Sanskrit, classical Chinese, Portuguese and again Dutch — were still more forbidding. All of this served to accentuate the revolutionary doctrine that the past was a distant country of little real relevance. History students were always few in Indonesian universities, and their theses tended increasingly to concentrate on topics that could be dealt with in Indonesian and a little English. The Japanese Occupation and the Revolution of 1945-50 were favourite topics, since oral history could be combined with newspapers, and the general theme was widely agreed.

Studies of the 1950s, 1960s and thereafter ventured into more dangerous territory of many dark shadows. It was best left to officially-connected writers and foreigners. The fact that great emphasis in the school system was placed on an official version of history coloured more by nationalist and military myth than by contemporary concerns, added to its perceived low employment prospects, made history unpopular as a university subject. This may be part of the reason why historians played a relatively small part in debates on national issues even when these became vibrant again after 1987, and why such a large proportion of the history sold in Indonesian bookshops in the 1980s and 1990s was translated from foreign work.

National and Local

A second problem has been the disjunction between local histories and the national idea. The heroic ideals of the nationalist movement, sanctified during the revolutionary struggle of the 1940s, were about national unity in

opposition to Dutch oppression. Since the most obvious common factor of the Netherlands Indies history they learned in schools had been Dutch rule itself, this became the dominant theme of the new Indonesian history, with suitable interchanging of heroes and villains. The nationalists of the 1920s and 1930s, raised on colonial textbooks about the rise of Dutch power over the archipelago, already decided that the most interesting characters of that story were the "rebels" who had opposed the Dutch, and in prehistory the builders of great "empires" which most nearly coincided with that of the Dutch. The moments of armed resistance were the best represented in the new textbooks, and their most appropriate heroes were those who had died opposing Dutch rule.

This theme created a point of contact between the separate histories of the archipelago and the new national myth. Those who had fought most passionately against incorporation into the national project, like the Acehnese resistance of 1873–1912, the Batak millenarian supporters of Sisingamangaraja XII, or the militant Wahabbi zealots in Minangkabau of the 1830s, were transformed into unwitting proto-nationalist heroes. A striking example of how this magic was effected was the twenty-three-year-old Hasan Muhammad Tiro, who in 1948 wrote what he claimed to be the first history of the Aceh war in "our language", Indonesian, to prove that the bitter Acehnese resistance was "one undivided part of Indonesian history".[2] This worked very well for the needs of the revolutionary struggle. As a permanent basis for understanding the diversities of Indonesian history, however, the formula was dangerously flawed.

For the majority of Indonesians whose rulers had made the necessary accommodations to Dutch commercial hegemony, this format either distorted or ignored their own history. Even the great liberator of the Bugis from their subjection to Makasar, Arung Palakka, had to be declared a villain or a nonentity because he allied with the Dutch. More sadly whole peoples (like the people of Flores or Nias, the Toraja, the Dayak) seemed to have no history unless or until they could find a rebel to fit the formula. Even Acehnese, who received far more than their demographic share of national heroes, increasingly failed to see the connection between what their ancestors fought for and the state that ruled them after 1950.

The initial nationalist writing of Indonesian history was of course questioned by many in the 1950s and 1960s, on local, Islamic or Marxist grounds. But the natural evolution towards a much more complex explanation with room for local stories was interrupted first by Sukarno's return to the old revolutionary themes in 1959, and then by the militarization of history in the Suharto era. In fact some valuable local histories were written in the 1950s, usually by journalists with some pre-war Dutch education.[3] But the Indonesian-educated generation who followed them had no such knowledge or motivation to retell the local stories.

The cult of national heroes was one of President Sukarno's principal initiatives to remake Indonesian memory around a revolutionary theme. In a set of decrees between 1957 and 1963 he laid down the procedure for declaring as national heroes people who had outstandingly resisted colonialism or served the cause of independence. Remuneration was arranged for the descendants of those so named (creating a small industry of lobbyists) and the manner of commemorating them through monuments, anniversaries, schools texts and street names was prescribed. Beginning in 1959, Sukarno proclaimed as national heroes the handful of anti-Dutch fighters of the nineteenth century already canonized by the nationalist movement, and added to it ever more twentieth century nationalist leaders and a few mighty kings (Iskandar Muda, Sultan Agung) who had entered the Dutch textbooks. Ninety-four heroes (only nine women) were declared between 1959 and 1992, although the two communists among them were removed from the list after the change of direction in 1965–66.[4]

The regime of Suharto was not at all interested in celebrating revolution, but did take over from Sukarno the theme of anti-Dutch struggle. The fact that many of those already declared heroes had died fighting the Dutch made it a small step to portray armed struggle as the *leitmotif* of national history, and the national army as its natural contemporary upholder. By 1992, twenty-three military officers had been added to the pantheon of national heroes, more than a third of the total declared under Suharto.

A key figure in the development of this official history was (Brigadier General) Dr Nugroho Notosusanto (1931–85), a capable professional historian who was convinced that history was the way to build an integral state with

the army as its backbone. General Nasution brought him into the military in 1964 to set up the History Centre of the Armed Forces (Pusat Sejarah ABRI). He was asked to counter then dominant left-wing interpretations of Indonesia's past, and ensure in particular that the Communist Party (PKI)'s "treacherous" role in 1948, as the army saw it, was not forgotten. Once the military-backed Suharto regime was in place, Nugroho directed the centre to prepare "an integral history curriculum for the whole armed forces". He declared that "*history* is the most effective means to achieve the two [principal] goals, that is the goal of strengthening the spirit of integration in the Armed Forces, and the goal of perpetuating the precious values of the 1945 struggle."[5] Already then, in the late 1960s, he saw this project as a model for a true "history textbook that was systematic and integrated" for the whole national education system.[6] The latter task proved difficult, and Nugroho did not have things all his own way in the National History which was finally and controversially presented to schools in 1977.[7]

Nevertheless his was by far the most influential voice in establishing an official view of history in the 1970s and 1980s. As Minister of Education from 1983 he was able to ensure not only that the obligatory history subject in all schools served his objective of national unity, but also that an additional compulsory subject, "History of National Struggle" was added in 1985 — though removed ten years later. Together these two compulsory subjects represented a larger share of the primary and secondary curriculum than any other subject. As Jean Taylor put it, "The history classroom functioned to suppress knowledge of difference."[8] Dr. Nugroho was also the prime mover in the design in the late 1960s of the National Monument Museum and the Armed Forces Museum of the struggle of Indonesia, both showing the nation's history and identity as essentially a military struggle against enemies without and within.[9]

As Niels Mulder explained in a recent study, the textbooks used in all Indonesian classrooms up to the end of the Suharto regime expressed the meaning of Indonesian history in terms that projected modern boundaries back as a kind of past "given", with local kings acting always in a benign way to develop the people, while the outsiders come to oppress. Dutch oppression is given purpose, however, by the canonical series of armed

actions against the Dutch, led by the established heroes Pattimura, Diponegoro, Tuanku Imam Bondjol, Teungku Chik di Tiro, and so forth. The events of 1945–50 and the abortive coup of 1965 are covered in exhaustive detail, but many other events are ignored, notably including the killings of 1965–66 and all other New Order violence. The two key themes hammered home about the independent period are the absolute centrality to Indonesian national identity of the *Pancasila* and the 1945 Constitution, both imposed by Sukarno's Guided Democracy, and institutionalized into national consciousness by Suharto's government. Rebellions and conflicts are explained as deviations from these two principles, requiring the military to act.[10]

This heavy national imprint certainly did not encourage the flowering of local, social, or alternative history. Most of those who continued to write history did so within the national paradigm, finding anti-Dutch, revolutionary, or military themes also in their own locality. Many of those most strongly connected to local pasts as aristocrats or intellectuals had supported the wrong, federal/Dutch side in the war of 1945–49, and therefore kept their silence if they remained in Indonesia after 1950. Partly because the case for continuity with a local past was so difficult to make within Indonesia in the 1950s and 60s, the most passionate arguments for autonomous histories were made by exiles outside Indonesia, especially from supporters of a separate destiny for West Papua, South Maluku, and Aceh.

Acehnese understandably felt they had the strongest credentials in terms of anti-Dutch struggle, including choosing the right, Indonesian Republican, side in 1945–49. They were therefore not intimidated by the new order after 1950, and produced the most frequent celebrations of a particular past. The most extreme was Hasan Mohammad Tiro, a descendant through his mother of the famous Tiro *ulama* who had led the last phase of resistance to the Dutch, and a passionate youth activist himself on the republican side in 1945, distinguished chiefly by his great interest in history. Once outside Indonesia, as a student and part-time assistant of the Indonesian mission to the UN, he gradually parted company with official history. The first step was his support for Daud Beureu'eh's 1953 rebellion, which led to

the immediate cancellation of his Indonesian passport, permanent domicile in the United States (and later Sweden), and publication of a polemic for a less centralized Indonesia.[11] By 1973 he had studied enough Acehnese history to celebrate publicly in New York the centenary of Aceh's defeat of the first Dutch expedition against it in 1873. Three years later he returned to Aceh secretly and proclaimed its independence, in a declaration which set out his radically different ideas about the past:

> Our fatherland, Acheh,[12] Sumatra, had always been a free and sovereign state since the world begun (sic). Holland was the first foreign power to attempt to colonise us when it declared war against the Sovereign State of Acheh on March 26, 1873, and on the same day invaded our territory, aided by Javanese mercenaries..... However, when, after World War II, the Dutch East Indies was supposed to have been liquidated...our fatherland, Acheh, was not returned to us. Instead, our fatherland was turned over by the Dutch to the Javanese — their ex-mercenaries — by hasty fiat of colonial powers. The Javanese are alien and foreign people to us Achehnese Sumatrans. We have no historic, political, cultural, economic, or geographic relationship with them. When the fruits of Dutch conquest are preserved, intact, and then bequeathed, as it were, to the Javanese, the result is inevitable that a Javanese colonial empire would be established in place of that of the Dutch over our fatherland....
>
> 'Indonesia' was a fraud: a cloak to cover up Javanese colonialism. Since the world begun, there never was a people, much less a nation, in our part of the world by that name... 'Indonesia' is merely a new label, in a totally foreign nomenclature which has nothing to do with our own history, language, culture, or interests; it was a new label considered useful by the Dutch[13] to replace the despicable 'Dutch East Indies' in an attempt to unite the administration of their ill-gotten far-flung colonies...If Dutch colonialism was wrong, then Javanese colonialism which was squarely based on it cannot be right.[14]

Needless to say, this radically regionalist construction of the past was never debated inside Indonesia, where even federalism was difficult to raise until the late 1990s. Arguably, however, teaching millions of diverse schoolchildren a monolithic national syllabus bearing "no direct relationship to the lived history of their parents and grandparents"[15] made such extreme appeals as Tiro's more attractive to those who heard it.

Dealing with Democracy

The problems described above, the revolutionary break from the *ancien regime* and the Dutch language, do not explain the relative lack of interest by younger Indonesian historians in the democratic period, usually defined as 1950-57. This was the one period before the fall of Suharto in 1998 when fair elections were held, the press was free, debates were robust, and different parties contended to define the future of Indonesia. Although the first national elections were not held until 1955, in fact the previous revolutionary period (1945–49) had also been distinguished by a kind of parliamentary system, in which the great differences on the Republican side were managed by negotiations between their parties in a parliament. Governments were overthrown and replaced even more rapidly in the revolutionary period (ten cabinets) than the so-called "parliamentary" period (seven cabinets). The whole period 1945–57 should therefore serve as a particularly useful model for the new experiments with democracy since 1998.

Yet Sukarno, the military, and apologists of Suharto's government have been so successful in portraying the democratic period as "failure" that even democrats have been slow to redeem it. The army had always been uneasy with civilian and especially political party leadership, its first generation trained by the Japanese military to see "Western liberalism" as weakness. In the late 1950s, Sukarno was able to obtain the support of the army and enough other dissatisfied groups to have "parliamentary democracy" replaced by what he called "Guided Democracy" with himself at the centre. As he proclaimed in 1957:

> I came to the conviction that we had used a wrong system, the wrong style of government, that is, the style which we call western

> democracy.... We have experienced all the excesses which result from effectuating an imported idea...which is not in harmony with our national soul. ... It is this idea of the opposition which has made us go through hardships for eleven years.[16]

The rhetoric of the Guided Democracy period which followed was increasingly shrill, as the economy collapsed, social tensions increased, and Sukarno professed "I am crazed, I am obsessed by the Romanticism of Revolution."[17] Despite the horrors that accompanied the army's ousting of Sukarno in 1965–66 (see below), many were relieved to be able to return to a calmer atmosphere under the Suharto regime. Those policies of Guided Democracy which were linked with the PKI, and notably the ruinous attempts at a command economy, were reversed by the new regime. But many of the political tactics that Sukarno had used to curb the parties were continued and developed by the New Order.

For our purpose it is important to note that Sukarno's negative view of the parliamentary period was continued and entrenched into the education system. Army strategists were determined not to return to a parliamentary system, and on the whole shared Sukarno's view about the divisiveness of party politics. The first of the textbooks produced by Pusat Sejarah ABRI declared that "As a result of the 'liberal' Western system which was applied in Indonesia, there was a rise of anarchy."[18] One analyst of Suharto-era ideology has concluded that by putting Dr. Nugroho in charge of developing an integral master text of Indonesian history, "the New Order leadership were doing their best to convince the public at large and the younger generation in particular that the only alternative to the present [Suharto] system of rule was anarchy."[19]

The school texts achieved this by portraying the 1945–49 period as essentially a military struggle in which party politics were a dangerous distraction and the skillful diplomatic negotiations of the civilian leadership were almost treasonous. The 1950s were then portrayed as dominated by regional rebellions. The junior high school text, for example, devoted twenty-three paragraphs to various regional rebellions suppressed by the military in the 1950s, and only two paragraphs to parliamentary politics.[20] Hatta's

3 November decree which in reality saved the republic by broadening its base beyond the Japanese-nurtured group who had set it up, was portrayed as a "dark day" when the republic went down the ruinous road of party politics. The 1950 "liberal" Constitution was portrayed as a fundamentally flawed document arising from the compromises of civilian politicians, and Sukarno's return to the authoritarian 1945 Constitution as a necessary step to restore an "Indonesian" spirit to the political system.[21]

While these views were of course contested in the universities by a broader range of views, there were good reasons not to try to build a history career by challenging the Nugroho format on the 1950s. Most serious historians avoided the period. In the battle over the authoritative resource-book for teachers, the six-volume *Sejarah Nasional Indonesia*, they had little choice but to concede to Nugroho the definition of what post-independence history was about.[22] Among the dissident voices that emerged in the 1990s, it was not historians but two lawyers who launched the most thorough critiques of New Order historiography. The pioneer of legal aid in Indonesia, Buyung Nasution, decided to write his dissertation in the Netherlands on the constituent assembly which Sukarno abolished by decree in 1959, revealing that it was the danger of its being close to success, rather than its failure, which had most troubled Sukarno and the army.[23] Democracy activist Marsillam Simanjuntak went further in his critique of the role of quasi-fascist integralist thinking in the minds of those who drew up the 1945 Constitution, subsequently sanctified under the New Order.[24]

The 1965 Trauma

Democracy at least was constantly talked about through the Suharto years. The violent events that began the New Order regime were covered by a deeper silence. An ostensibly pro-Sukarno coup attempt against anti-communist generals in the small hours of 1 October 1965 had misfired, and seven generals were killed instead of captured. The murder of these generals was blamed on the PKI by the military, and used as a justification for the subsequent destruction of communism through killings and detentions, and for General Suharto's seizure of power. As Suharto gradually drew all

effective power into his hands, the military rounded up many of the 300,000 cadres of the Communist Party and encouraged Muslim and other youth groups to kill local leftist leaders and sympathizers. The PKI was completely eliminated as a factor in Indonesian politics, despites its claimed three million members and over six million voters (in 1955). Although nobody knows the full toll, military spokesmen later conceded that around a half million people were probably murdered in the violence between November 1965 and February 1966, and other estimates have ranged much higher. Around a million more were detained for periods of up to fifteen years, and permanently deprived of many of their rights as citizens.

These mass killings were much less documented and analyzed in the West than their importance justified, perhaps because they were not as explicitly state-directed as in Cambodia or Nazi Germany, perhaps because they made possible a change of direction welcome in Western capitals. Reportage was difficult, survivors were few and terrified. Moreover the issue was immediately caught up in Cold War polemics. One of the most careful studies of the 1 October coup attempt and the violence that followed, the famous "Cornell paper", was only published, its authors claimed, because anti-communist commentators were beginning to claim that it was being suppressed out of cold war motives.[25] Although the horrific events were known through newspaper and journal articles soon after the time, only in the 1990s did a few book-length studies begin to be published on them.[26]

Inside Indonesia the silence was much graver. In an atmosphere of great fear, the penalties for condemning or publicizing the killings seemed likely to be very heavy. Many of the elite who on other issues might be democratic and liberal believed that they would themselves have been killed if the communists had come out on top. Hostility between the two camps had become intense and bitter in the late Sukarno years. The now dominant Armed Forces put great emphasis on establishing their version of events in the public mind. The first step was to focus public attention on the killing of six generals (and one lieutenant) during the Untung coup attempt, and linking this with Madiun (1948) as evidence of the diabolical treachery of the PKI. October 1 became a national holiday as "Sanctifying *Pancasila*" (through the blood of these martyrs), and the site of the generals' death was

built into a national shrine and museum of PKI treachery. An expensive feature film, "The Treachery of G-30-S" was prepared under the direction of Nugroho and leading film director Arifin C. Noer, and shown on television on every anniversary of 1 October.[27] All of this heavy-handed consciousness-building was designed to leave no room for memory of the hundreds of thousands of dead communists.

The official history of the textbooks was also guided very firmly on these issues. Nugroho began work immediately after 1965 on chronicling the attempted coup from the army's point of view, as PKI treachery. After the "Cornell paper" was circulated abroad, he was tasked also to produce an English-language rebuttal, published in early 1968.[28] These studies naturally portrayed the whole affair not as a massacre, but as a restoration of order by the military. The history textbooks Nugroho inspired made no mention of the mass killings, while carefully setting out the way in which the Armed Forces had rescued the nation from the PKI. Even the more academic and substantial National History, in the final volume edited by Nugroho, makes no mention of the mass killings that devastated Central and East Java and killed five per cent of the population of Bali.

Although the official myth of the Suharto era encouraged Indonesians to think that atrocities were committed only by colonialists and communists, in fact there was increasingly public debate about state violence in the 1990s, which became much more open after Suharto's fall. Islamic organizations tended to demand accountability for the bloody suppression of Muslim protestors in Tanjung Priuk and Lampung. Megawati's party demanded accounting for the violent break-up of a PDI-P meeting in 1996. Chinese Indonesians, and after 1998, church and women's groups and Chinese diaspora networks, demanded accounting for military-linked violence against the Chinese-Indonesian minority, of which the systematic rapes of 1998 were particularly emotive. Increasingly active, foreign-funded human rights groups drew attention to the much larger number of murders of alleged criminals, unionists, oppositionists, and others disapproved by the regime, including several thousand victims of "mysterious killings" (*petrus*) in the years from 1983. International pressure eventually led to Indonesian enquiries and trials of a few officers held responsible for atrocities

in East Timor, and after 1998, also in Aceh and West Papua. Increasingly, in other words, there is public acceptance of the fact that the Indonesian military has used systematic terror against its opponents, and that its extra-judicial violence has been the chief obstacle to a rule of law in the country.

But few have spoken up for the victims of 1965. The destruction of the left was so total and so devastating that those survivors with a personal interest in rehabilitation have themselves scarcely dared to raise the issue, as other interested parties have done for less portentous crimes. Reducing the hold of government and army on power, moreover, leaves minorities prey to even more frightening intimidation. A brave little NGO was born in 2001, the Institute to Investigate the 1965–66 Massacres, but when it planned a religious reburial of twenty-six victims in one Central Java hamlet, death threats from the local Islamic solidarity front obliged them to call it off.[29]

Post-Suharto Reconsiderations

The pattern strongly established under Nugroho's guidance appears to have been little changed in the textbooks published since the fall of Suharto's government in 1998. While we might have hoped for an outpouring of questions long suppressed, the truth may be that thirty years of suppressing curiosity about the past have taken too heavy a toll.

Textbooks on sale in 2003 appeared to differ in no basic way from the established format described above. Colonialism and the long-established "Process of Resistance in various regions to foreign domination" remain the sole ways to understand national history in the period before 1900.[30] The 2003 edition of the history textbook for senior high schools claimed to have incorporated "new nuances" in response to a 2002 decree by the minister of National Education. "In some sections there were improvements, both editorially and in layout."[31] At least there was some revision of the uncomfortable inflation of Suharto's heroism in the revolution. The "six hours in Jogja" incident which became so prominent in the late Suharto period, because Suharto's role in it could be exaggerated to heroic proportions, is simply not mentioned in the 2003 edition. But it is fair to say that nothing has been done to reconsider what national history should be

about. More worrying is the continuing absence of any invitation to critical thinking in discussing national history. Only foreigners may have honest debates, revisionism and tragedy. Indonesian states do no wrong.

The process of changing the history syllabus in a profound enough way to make it relevant, interesting and helpful to Indonesian students will no doubt take another generation. A beginning has been made in the customary top-down way. In 2001 the Minister of Education entrusted a team of eighty historians with the task of rewriting in eight volumes the six-volume *Sejarah Nasional Indonesia* of 1977. The large team and greater length already suggests the expanding number of regional and sectional points of view that now have to be accommodated. To judge by a recent press statement by Anhar Gonggong, a senior member of the team, some issues may be able to be treated as still controversial, suggesting alternative points of view. The chief incidents Anhar listed included three long-standing issues which might almost be called "official controversies" between the Sukarno and Suharto regimes:

1) "*Lahirnya Pancasila*". Nugroho Notosusanto had disputed Sukarno's claim to be the author of *Pancasila*, preferring to give the credit to Muhammad Yamin. Sukarno's claim may be reasserted.
2) "Six hours in Jogja". Suharto's youthful role in the 1949 attack on Jogjakarta will certainly be reduced.
3) "*Supersemar*". The Sukarno letter giving official authority to Suharto on 11 March 1966 has never been found, and the New Order's subsequent celebration of the decree as the basis for its constitutionality will be questioned.[32]

Two more fundamental issues were on Anhar's list, however. One was the responsibility for the Untung coup attempt of 1 October 1965, or the 30 September movement (G-30-S) as it is usually known in Indonesia. The new history promises to consider the line of argument long common outside Indonesia but banned under Suharto's rule, that the PKI was only marginally involved in what was essentially an internal army conflict, and that there is evidence that Suharto himself, the most senior general not targetted by the

plotters, had prior knowledge that some kind of action was being planned. Since Anhar did not mention the much more difficult issue of the subsequent massacres in his interview, however, it may be left to readers to make their own inferences about responsibility for these.

The only regional issue mentioned by Anhar was the 1975 invasion and subsequent annexation of East Timor. The older version that had Indonesia selflessly bringing help to a grateful people certainly requires revision, if only for the sake of civil relations with a new neighbour. The term "annexation" will now be used.[33] Will the new treatment encourage discussion of other regional issues that trouble minorities, including different views on the incorporation of reluctant Papuans in the 1960s, or the reasons for Acehnese alienation since the 1950s? The new official history will at least need to allow for plural interpretations, and to acknowledge that Indonesians legitimately have different interests and aspirations, which need to be discussed and negotiated.

Younger historians, with no particular stake in the compromises of the Suharto period, are naturally more radical in their probing. Being now convinced that they were lied to about the events of the 1960s, before most of them were born, they want to know what really happened. The forbidden pre-1965 literature of the left is now being republished, and works by Pramoedya Ananta Toer, Tan Malaka, Njoto and Aidit, not to mention Marx, fill the university bookshops. The memoir of a doctor activist of the new left is selling well under the title, *I am Proud to be a Child of the PKI*.[34]

Meanwhile there has been debate in the press about how to reinterpret the past in an era of relative freedom, though it has to be said that the established historians have not been very prominent in it. Probably the most debated issue has been the 1965 coup attempt, and the way it was used to justify the military seizure of effective power (but not the massacres). The professional historian most tirelessly raising these issues has been Asvi Warman Adam of LIPI, perhaps significantly French-trained and outside the Gadjah Mada stable. Already in 2000 he was revisiting all the foreign theories about Suharto's and the army's responsibility for the coup attempt. He went further to demand the demiliterization of the history of the 1950s, where textbooks portrayed regional rebellion purely

in terms of armed conflicts and the army's defence of the nation.[35] Even more strident was Slamet Soetrisno, a Gadjah Mada philosophy graduate and independent writer, who in 1999–2000 raised many of the issues referred to by Anhar Gonggong, but also others such as the silence about the military's attempted coup of 17 October 1952, and the intellectual support for Sukarno's 1959 shift to authoritarianism through the 1945 Constitution. The blurb on the back of these collected articles reads, "History has been used as a tool of power to legitimate a dictatorship. As a result, society has experienced amnesia towards important and meaningful historical events. The reconstruction of history is essential to awake from that amnesia." Though Soetrisno is by no means part of the professional history establishment, one of the leading Gadjah Mada historians did provide a preface welcoming the book.[36]

As if to demonstrate that the old tactic of ending debate with the "right" answer was still alive and well, President Megawati in 2003 appointed a three-man commission to investigate the 1965 coup attempt. Asvi Warman was the sole younger historian, balanced by the two most senior figures still active in A.B. Lapian and Taufik Abdullah, all three thus from the state research institute LIPI.

Of course more profound critiques are to be found. At the Seventh National History Conference in October 2001, Rommel Cumaring noted at least two of the hundred papers, by younger European-trained professional historians Mestika Zed and Bambang Purwanto, struck at the heart of the old nationalist format. Dismayed at the tendency to replace Suharto with some other hero figure in a basically unchanged format, they wanted to overthrow the "tyranny of national history" itself.[37]

The hundreds of thousands of victims of the 1965–66 killings are a harder issue again, only addressed obliquely by professional historians and journalists through their questioning of responsibility for the coup attempt. Even here however there are initiatives, like the Jakarta conference of 13 December 2002 at which victims of the violence were heard and recognized. There is a network of graduate students and young lecturers throughout Central and East Java, seeking to document the killings of 1965–66 by finding survivors and burial sites. If and when critical members

of this generation grow to positions of influence the historiography will change profoundly. The centrality of the killings, as the basis for the Suharto government's unprecedented control of the population, means that painful rethinking will be required as to what truly constitutes the nation. Without the terror, how if at all is Indonesia's sprawling archipelago to cohere? Serious analysis will lead still further back to the very beginnings of the Indonesian military in the independence struggle, whence its claims to be entitled to act outside the law essentially derive.

As the colossus of New Order history is gradually chipped away, it is unthinkable that any single format will arise to replace it. Indonesia's histories will be plural as its people are plural. A new generation will learn to cope with difference and conflict in the past as in the present, and to draw inspiration from the way these differences have invigorated the nation.

NOTES

1 Tan Malaka, *Massa-Actie* (1926), as cited in Mohammed Ali, *Pengantar Ilmu Sedjarah Indonesia* (Jakarta: Bhratara, 1963), p. 145. Also Mohammed Ali, *Pengantar Sedjarah Feodal Indonesia untuk Tenaga Sosial* (Bandung: 1953) and *Perdjuangan Feodal* (Bandung: 1954).

2 Hasan Muhammad Tiro, "Perang Atjeh, 1873–1927 M" (stencilled, Jogjakarta: April 1948).

3 Aceh was over-represented with Abdullah Arif, *Tindjauan Sedjarah Pergerakan di Atjeh* (Kutaradja: 1950); Mohammad Said, *Atjeh Sepandjang Abad* (Medan: 1961); H.M. Zainuddin, *Tarich Atjeh dan Nusantara* (Medan: 1961); but note also Muhammad Radjab, *Perang Padri di Sumatera Barat (1803–1838)* (Jakarta: 1954); and Amen Budiman, *Semarang Riwayatmu Dulu* (Semarang: 1978). The official series of volumes on each of the then ten provinces, issued by the information ministry in 1954, also represented a remarkable embodying into the national narrative, largely by journalists, of distinct pre-war stories — *Republik Indonesia: Propinsi XX* (Djakarta: Kementerian Penerangan, 1954).

4 Klaus Schreiner, *Politischer Heldenkult in Indonesien* (Hamburg: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 1995).

5 Nugroho Notosusanto, 'Pengantar Umum', in Drs Ariwiadi, *Ichtisar Sedjarah Nasional Indonesia (awal-sekarang)* (Seri Text-book Sejarah ABRI, Jakarta: Pusat Sedjarah ABRI, 1971), p. vi.

6 Ibid., loc. cit.

7 Sartono Kartodirdjo, Marwati Djoened Poesponegoro, Nugroho Notosusanto, eds., *Sejarah Nasional Indonesia*, 6 vols. (Jakarta: Balai Pustaka, 1977). The conflict between Nugroho's desire to push through an "integral" view, and the misgivings of the non-military historians led by his mentor Sartono, was an open secret.

8 Jean Taylor, *Indonesia: Peoples and Histories* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), p. 362.

9 The most thorough account of Nugroho's role thus far is in Katherine McGregor, "Claiming History: Military Representations of the Indonesian Past in Museums, Monuments and other Sources of Official History from Late Guided Democracy to the New Order", unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Melbourne University, 2002. McGregor published a brief overview as "A Soldiers' Historian", *Inside Indonesia*, July–September 2001.

10 Niels Mulder, *Indonesian Images: The Culture of the Public World* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2000), pp. 36–44, 53–55, 72–83.

11 Hasan Muhammad Tiro, *Demokrasi untuk Indonesia*, (np: Penerbit Seulawah Aceh, 1958). This is the only one of Tiro's works to have been properly printed, which may suggest the often rumoured CIA assistance at this stage of his career.

12 Whereas I have followed Indonesian usage since 1974, which changed the Dutch 'tj' into 'c' in words such as Aceh, Hasan Tiro has consistently used an older English spelling "Acheh".

13 This is overstating the case. 'Indonesia' or 'islands of India' was first coined by European philologists in the mid-nineteenth century, and became gradually more useful as a way to describe the languages and peoples of the Archipelago. The high point of colonial acceptance may have been at the end of World War I, when the semi-official *Encyclopedia van Nederlandsch-Indië* used it as a linguistic category, and two men later to become influential officials — H.J. van Mook and J.A. Jonkman — both used the term in their theses. It was, however, the anti-Dutch nationalist movement which popularized and politicized the term in the following period, 1922–45. Only after the Japanese occupation and the proclamation of the Indonesian Republic in August 1945 did the term enter official Dutch usage.

14 The Declaration is in "The Price of Freedom: The Unfinished Diary of Tengku Hasan di Tiro" (stencilled, np [Stockholm?]: State of Acheh Sumatra, 1982), pp. 15–17.

15 David Bourchier, "The 1950s in New Order Ideology and Politics", in *Democracy in Indonesia: 1950s and 1990s*, edited by David Bourchier and John Legge (Melbourne: Monash University Centre for Southeast Asian Studies, 1994), p. 57.

16 Sukarno, "Saving the Republic of the Proclamation", speech of 21 February 1957, as translated in *Indonesian Political Thinking, 1945–1965*, edited by Herbert Feith and Lance Castles (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1970), pp. 84–85.
17 Sukarno, "Like an Angel that Strikes from the Sky", speech of 17 August 1960, translated in ibid., p. 114.
18 Ariwiadi, *Ichtisar Sedjarah Nasional Indonesia*, p. 122.
19 Bourchier, "The 1950s", p. 57.
20 Ibid., p. 54.
21 Ibid., pp. 51–57.
22 While the six-volume set was edited by a team of Sartono Kartodirdjo, Marwati Djoened Poesponegoro and Nugroho Notosusanto, the final volume of *Sejarah Nasional Indonesia*, covering the period since 1942, was edited by Nugroho, and apparently went to print without the blessing of Professor Sartono.
23 Adnan Buyung Nasution, *The Aspiration for Constitutional Government in Indonesia: A Socio-legal Study of the Indonesian Konstituante, 1956–1959* (Published Ph.D. dissertation, Utrecht University, 1992).
24 Marsillam Simanjuntak, *Pandangan Negara Integralistik: Sumber, Unsur dan Riwayatnya dalam Persiapan UUD 1945* (Jakarta: Grafiti, 1994).
25 Benedict Anderson and Ruth McVey, *A Preliminary Analysis of the October 1, 1965, Coup in Indonesia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Modern Indonesia Project, 1971 — first circulated 1966).
26 Robert Cribb, ed., *The Indonesian Killings, 1965–1966: Studies from Java and Bali* (Melbourne: Monash University Centre for Southeast Asian Studies, 1990).; Geoffrey Robinson, *The Dark Side of Paradise: Political Violence in Bali* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995).
27 McGregor, "Claiming History".
28 Nugroho Notosusanto and Ismail Saleh, *The Coup Attempt of the '30th September Movement' in Indonesia* (Jakarta: Pembimbing Massa, 1968).
29 Taylor, *Indonesia*, p. 359.
30 Nico Thamiend, *Sejarah 2 untuk Kelas 2 SMU: Pendekatan Kurikulum Berbasis Kompetensi* (Jakarta: Yudhistira, 2003), pp. 20–49.
31 Ibid., p. v.
32 *Jakarta Post*, 6 October 2003.
33 Ibid.
34 Ribka Tjiptaning Proletariyati, *Aku Bangga Jadi Anak PKI*, second edn., with preface by Abdurrahman Wahid (Jakarta: Doea Lentera Agency: 2002).
35 *Kompas*, 22 August 2003
36 Slamet Soetrisno, *Kontroversi dan Rekonstruksi Sejarah*, with preface by Suhartono Pranoto (Yogyakarta: Pressindo, 2003).

37 Rommel Curaming, "Towards Reinventing Indonesian Nationalist Historiography", *Kyoto Review of Southeast Asia* 3 (March 2003); on web.

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